

## Temporary Tattoos by nightcore

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**Genre:** F/F, Fluff, max works at an arcade, references to past lumax but no romantic feelings or anything

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, i was pretty sure the guy who worked at the arcade was named Kevin so he's there too

**Relationships:** Eleven/Max (Stranger Things), Eleven/Maxine "Max" Mayfield, elmax

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**Summary:**

Max has been into Eleven since she first saw her, but she figured she'd spend more time behind the glass counter pining than anything else. A crummy job at an arcade is always made better when a cute girl shows up.

# Temporary Tattoos

## Author's Note:

Hey! My last elmax fic got a lot of good feedback so I hope this one holds up to that standard :0

also on tumblr @streddie !

Max had a job at the arcade. It wasn't a big gig, nor was it an important one, but neither of those things really mattered to her. It got her a pretty decent income, out of the house, and away from her brother. He *never* went into the arcade. Probably because of something stupid he had told her years prior, but she didn't remember -- nor did she care.

She worked at the prize counter. It was a pretty small establishment, but the few machines they had that actually gave out tickets were pretty commonly used. She didn't have a single day of the week without a conversation to keep her going, so it wasn't that bad. The flashing lights kept her mind occupied when it was quieter.

The boys came in most of the time, too. Their constant bickering and overbearing laughter kept her heart beating through the worst of it -- like when she had to clean up the vomit down the claw machine aisle. They didn't even *sell* food, so she didn't really see why it was *her* business to clean up the shitty mess. Kevin payed her extra for it, though.

Lucas would bring her lunch, sometimes. He was sweet to her, and she appreciated it. After their short ( *two month* ) relationship, they had both decided they were better off friends, but Lucas never stopped going over the top for her. She would be lying if she said she hasn't slipped him a few expensive prizes from behind the counter in return.

Her favorite days were when the boys would bring El. She wasn't very good at the arcade games, her mind only halfway connecting the flashing lights on the screen and the buttons on the box, but she wasn't the worst, either. Max loved to watch her play, the way her

face lit up when she finally beat a level was adorable; almost as adorable as when she would puff out her cheeks at a 'game over' screen, groaning and turning to one of the boys to ask for another quarter. They'd always give it to her, Max noticed, even if they wouldn't have enough to play a round themselves.

Max wouldn't deny she had a thing for El. She wouldn't tell the boys, maybe, but she couldn't deny it to herself. She had been sure of it ever since El walked into her life, hair slicked back and jacket falling off her shoulders. She was even *more* sure the first day El walked into the arcade, hair curling around her eyes and overalls rolled up to her knees. The girl was a powerhouse, and Max loved every bit of her.

"What're you staring at?" Lucas' voice brought her out of her daydream, and Max practically jumped out of her skin. She pulled her hand from her face and smiled, shaking her head.

"None of your business, stalker."

"Are you still calling me that, seriously? It's been months, Max. *Months.*" Lucas leaned against the counter, sighing. There was a goofy smile across his face. Max still couldn't believe she kissed that smile a few months back -- because he really felt more like a brother now. Not like her stepbrother, but a real, sometimes-annoying-but-genuinely-a-good-person brother.

"Months of you stalking me, stalker," She laughed, leaning back in her chair. The one promise Kevin, her boss, actually kept was getting her a chair behind the counter, claiming he was 'tired of her groaning about sore feet' and he 'didn't get it, because he could handle standing all day'.

"Whatever," Lucas sighed, dropping a brown paper bag on the counter. Max jumped up and grabbed it. "My mom made it special, this time. She says she misses you."

"That's weird, since I saw her last night." Max laughed, and Lucas groaned, rolling his eyes. Max opened it, revealing a neatly cut sandwich in it's own plastic wrapping (no crusts, just how she liked it), an orange, a juice box, and a freshly baked cookie. She grinned.

“I’ll tell her you said thank you.”

Max already had the cookie in her mouth, but she let out an odd ‘mmph’ sound in response, and Lucas snorted.

Before Lucas could say anything else, the bell above the arcade door rung. Mike, Dustin, and El walked through, shivering slightly from the cold outside. She and Lucas both waved, and the three smiled in response, pushing their way through the people and coming over to the counter. Max did her best to clean herself up before El got too close, but it was pretty evident she had just shoved an entire cookie into her mouth.

“Hey, guys,” Lucas spoke, pushing himself off the counter and turning to the three completely, “where’s Will?”

“Coming later. He’s doing something with Jonathan right now, I think,” Dustin shrugs, pulling his jacket off. Max takes it from him and hangs it on one of the hooks behind her, then does the same for Mike and El.

“Anything good today?” Mike asks, turning to Max. She shrugs, pointing to the glass counter, “These prizes are always the same, but,” she waves a hand behind her, scanning the shelves behind her before landing on a specific one, “there’s some atari games that are new. They’re Kevin’s old ones, so no promises that they actually work.”

“Sick! Alright, thanks, Max.”

“ No problem,” She drawled out her voice on the ‘no’, smiling. She watched the three of them walk away and spun the chair around, grabbing a random comic book -- Spider-man, from the prize shelf and flipping through it. She hadn’t realized El was still standing there until she heard a faint cough.

“What’s up, El? You okay?” Max asked, turning her chair back to the front. She closed the comic book in her hands and cursed to herself quietly for losing her page.

“What are these?” El pointed to the bottom half of the glass counter,

making Max bend down. She pulled the plastic box off of the shelf and placed it onto the top so El could get a closer look.

“Temporary tattoos. They’re like ... real tattoos, but they come off after a while. Or if you spend a lot of time scrubbing them off. Then they’ll come off right away.”

El hummed, bringing her hands up. She looked at Max for approval, and Max nodded, so El dug her hands in, sifting through the various designs. She finally settled on two, one of a pink flower, wrapped in leaves and sparkles, and the other a hyper realistic picture of a frog. She showed them to Max, proudly, who laughed.

“I like the frog,” She pulled the box back and put it under the counter again, pushing against the ‘5 ticket’ label. Kevin wouldn’t notice if a few went missing.

“Me too! He’s cute,” El pushed the flower one across the counter, “this one’s for you.”

Max probably could’ve died in that moment. She could feel her face heat up in milliseconds and heart skip a beat, stuttering out a ‘thank you’ before taking the paper tattoo and holding it up. El didn’t seem to notice her flustered state, thank god for that, and if she did, she said nothing about it.

El pulled the plastic off one end of the tattoo, inspecting it closely before sticking it back down. “How do you put them on?”

“Oh -- Uh -- You need warm water, and a towel, and stuff. I can do it for you, if you want.”

“Ok,” El smiled. This was almost too much for Max -- she never got this flustered around Lucas, but here she was, completely ruining her reputation and turning into a stuttering mess over a cute girl. She nodded and stood up, hopping over the side of the counter and moving to the bathroom, motioning for El to follow. The arcade only had one, unisex bathroom, and despite the state of the rest of the arcade, it stayed relatively clean.

“Here,” she stopped in front of the mirror, waving her hands in front

of El in some odd I'm-too-nervous-to-touch-you motion, causing El to cock her head in confusion. "Just, take the plastic off and stick the picture side down where you want it to be, and I'll do the rest."

She turned away from El and ripped a few paper towels from the machine, turning on the faucet and waiting for it to get warm. She didn't soak the towels, but she made them damp enough for it to work, ringing out a bit of the excess water over the sink. When she swung around, a few droplets of water splashed into El's eyes, and she recoiled.

"Oh -- shit! Sorry, El. Fuck."

"It's okay," El laughed, rubbing her eye with her free hand, "is this right?"

She leaned her arm down. The tattoo was covering her current one -- the white square of paper pressed against the inside of her wrist. Max's awkward smile faded into a frown, her brows furrowing, but she shook her head and smiled when she looked back up.

"Yeah, El. It's perfect."

Max hesitated, but took El's wrist in her hand, gently turning it so she could get a better view. She looked up at El for a moment, then back down, and pressed the paper towels against her wrist. She pushed gently at first, then as much force as she needed to ensure the image would stick. El pulled her fingers away from the paper slowly, as to not mess up the picture.

The room was so quiet, Max was sure El could hear her heartbeat.

"How long?"

"Not sure. A minute is usually what I go for, but I've got no real way to tell time in here."

"Okay."

God, a minute felt like *years*. El was so calm in Max's grasp, but Max was struggling her hardest not to shake. They kept sharing awkward glances, El staring at her with a mixture of gratitude and confusion

and Max desperately hoping the fluorescent lights were hiding her blush.

It didn't feel like they were alone in the room -- it felt like they were alone in the whole arcade. Like Max could pull on El's arm and they'd have the whole building to themselves. They'd be able to laugh and Max would teach El how to play Dig Dug, because she's *sure* that with enough practice she could be top of the leaderboard. *Maybe* Max would let her win, but she sure as hell wouldn't tell anybody about it.

"I wanna see," El said, pulling Max's hand off of her. Max was confused for a moment, but she dropped the paper towels in the garbage and wiped her hands on her shirt.

She let Max pull off the paper, revealing a yellow, striped, hyper realistic frog on her wrist. The edges of the tattoo were a bit uneven, but she smiled all the same.

"It's stuck!" She laughed, pressing her finger against it gently. She patted the edges down a bit, smoothing them out.

"Yeah, sure is." Max didn't pull her hand off El's wrist. She admired the tattoo, sure, but her gaze was more focused on El's smile.

There was silence between the two, now. Max was looking at El and El was staring back, both smiling and definitely blushing under the lights. Max didn't want to say she fell in love in an arcade bathroom, but it wouldn't have been a lie.

Suddenly, faster than Max could even react, El grabbed Max's forearm and pulled, closing the space between them and kissing her. She pulled away quickly, an unreadable expression on her face.

Not that Max even *bothered* taking the time to look -- not before she grabbed her face and kissed right back.

"You know," Max said when they broke apart, touching their foreheads together, "I really should get back to work."

"Not until I put your tattoo on, okay?" El's eyes shifted to the flower sitting on the bathroom counter, sparkling under the lights. Max

didn't answer, letting the silence do the talking when she kissed her again.